

COMPACT PACKAGED TOWEL

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to compact packaged towels and method for constructing the same.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Towels of various types are well known in the art. Presently health clubs, spas and gyms incur significant costs associated with purchasing, handling and washing towels used by people at these facilities. Daily, these facilities must deal with the process of collecting, storing and washing thousands of towels so that the towels can be available when facility guests require them. Some facility guests bring their own towels to the health club, for example. These persons are then responsible for purchase, transport, washing and care of their own towels. Most towels are typically bulky in form even when folded and, as a result, require a lot of space in a person's athletic bag or other carrying device. Frequently, after use of their own towels, a person will put the wet, dirty towel in a bag with their other personal belongings where the towel may stay for hours or days. The wet towel may damage their other personal belongings. Therefore, there is a need for a towel that is easily and compactly stored and that is disposable.

[0003] The present invention, a compact packaged towel, overcomes these and other problems inherent with existing towels. The present invention provides in one form, a towel made of durable, but disposable material that is packed in an enclosure, vacuum-suctioned and sealed so that it is compact. The present invention could be sold or made available at any location where towels are required. For example, the present invention may be used by consumers of camping goods, travel equipment, fitness products, etc.

[0004] For example, a health club could sell the compact packaged towel in vending machines in the locker rooms. A health club member could save space in their gym bag if they purchase the compact packaged towel at their gym instead of packing and transport a bulky towel. In addition, because the compact packaged towel is disposable, there is no need to haul wet towels from the health club to home. Health clubs that provide towel service could eliminate the need for laundering services or they could use the compact packaged towel in addition to their regular towel service, thus never having to deal with running out of clean towels.

[0005] The present invention may also be used in the outdoor camping arena. Campers could pack a supply of the compact packaged towel for the length of the camping trip. These towels could be disposed of after use instead of washed and hung to dry or hauled around wet in a camping gear bag.

[0006] The present invention would also be desirable for international travel. For example, there are many countries that are hot and humid. In some of these countries laundry left outside to dry can become insect infected. With the compact packaged towel, that problem is eliminated.

[0007] The compact packaged towel may be constructed in a variety of different sizes. For example, large sizes may be used as a bath towel or can be used during beach outings. A smaller size could be used to wipe off sweaty equipment in the health club as well as a general wipe to use during aerobic classes or other activities. A yet smaller version of the present invention could be used as a washcloth.

[0008] The principal object of the present invention is to provide an improved compact packaged towel that is disposable.

[0009] Another object of the present invention is to provide a novel compact packaged towel that is reduced in volume for minimal storage space requirements.

[0010] Another object of the present invention is to provide a novel compact packaged towel that is sanitary.

[0011] Still another object of the present invention is to provide a novel compact packaged towel that is easily opened and used by a consumer.

[0012] A further object of the present invention is to provide a novel compact packaged towel that is easily transported.

[0013] A further object of the present invention is to provide a novel compact packaged towel which is simple in design and inexpensive to construct, and is durable and rugged in structure.

[0014] Still further objects and advantages will become apparent from a consideration of the ensuing description and drawings of the invention.

[0015] These and other objects are achieved by compact packaged towel of the present invention. In one form of the invention, compact packaged towel is provided which comprises at least one towel, a first sheet and a second sheet. The edges of the first sheet are sealed to the corresponding edges of the second sheet and define a compartment between the two sheets. The at least one towel is positioned within the compartment from which substantially all of the air is removed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the compact packaged towel with a perforation type opening device;

[0017] FIG. 2 is perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the compact packaged towel with a pull string opening device of the present invention;

[0018] FIG. 3 is a partial top view of another alternate embodiment of the compact packaged towel with a notch opening device of the present invention; and

[0019] FIG. 4 is a cross sectional view of the compact packaged towel of FIG. 3 taken along line 4-4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0020] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the compact packaged towel 10 constructed in accordance with the present invention. In FIG. 1, the compact packaged towel 10 comprises a package or pouch 16 and a towel 24 positioned inside the package 16.

[0021] As shown in FIGS. 1 and 4, in one form of the compact packaged towel 10, the pouch 16 may be comprised of a first wall 18 and a second wall 20. The two walls 18 and 20 may be positioned to provide for the towel 24 to be folded and stored within a compartment 22 formed by the two walls 18 and 20. The walls 18 and 20 are joined to each other along the perimeter of walls 18 and 20 at edges 23. As the walls 18 and 20 are joined at edges 23, substantially all of the air is evacuated from compartment 22 and a seal 21 is formed thereby preventing air from entering compartment 22. Once substantially all of the air has been evacuated from compartment 22 and after the walls 18 and 20 have been sealed about edges 23, folded towel 24 will then be compressed in compact form and have a substantially reduced volume as shown in FIGS. 1 and 4. In one form of the invention, the air may be evacuated from compartment 22 by vacuum sealing or by any other way that will provide for proper operation of the compact packaged towel 10.

[0022] Walls 18 and 20 may be comprised of flexible sheets of plastic materials or any other type of materials that will provide for proper operation of compact packaged towel 10. Edges 23 of walls 18 and 20 may be joined to each other and sealed by heat-sealing, glue or other adhesive or by any other means which will provide for one or more towels 24 to be positioned in compartment 22 and where substantially all of the air is evacuated from

compartment 22. In yet other forms of the invention, walls 18 and 20 may be made of one sheet or multiple sheets of material.

[0023] Towel 24 may be made of any liquid absorbing material such as, for example, cotton, paper or any other material or combination of materials whether synthetic or natural that permits towel 24 to reduce in volume when it is compressed between walls 18 and 20. In yet other embodiments, the towel 24 may be made of any materials that are recyclable, durable and/or disposable. In one embodiment, the towel may be a Kimberly-Clark® Shoppro® towel with dimensions approximately 28 inches in length and 14 inches in width. A towel with these dimensions may be folded several times so that the folded towel 24 has a width of 3½ inches and a length of 3½ inches. In yet other embodiments, any other size towel may be used. For example, different size towels may be provided for a beach blanket, a bath towel, a hand towel, a wash cloth or any other size towel for a specific application and/or use. In yet other forms of the invention, towel 24 may be premoistened with a liquid such as water, soap or any other liquid or solution. This embodiment, may be particularly useful where the user does not have access to soap or water, for example. In still yet other embodiments, more than one towel may be positioned in compartment 22.

[0024] As shown in FIGS. 1, 2 and 3, there are a variety of ways to open the compact packaged towel 10 and provide for towel 24 to be removed from compartment 22. As shown in FIG. 1, pouch edge 23 may have perforations 46 along one or more edges 23. In this form of the invention, as shown in FIG. 1, the user may open pouch 16 by tearing edge 23 along perforations 46 and thereby allowing access to compartment 22 so that towel 24 can be easily removed. In yet other embodiments, as shown in FIG. 2, a device such as a pull string or band 40 may be used to open pouch 16 for access to towel 24 stored in compartment 22. In this form of the invention, a string 40 may be positioned along compartment wall 18 or 20 substantially as shown in FIG. 2. In other embodiments, string 40 may be positioned along compartment wall 18 or 20 so that string 40 extends along a horizontal or vertical length of compartment wall 18 or 20 and so as to provide access to towel 24 when string 40 is separated from wall 18 or 20 as shown in FIG. 2. String 40 may be attached to wall 18 or 20 by adhesive, heat sealing or any other means that will provide for an opening 42 to be formed in wall 18 or 20 when string 40 is separated from wall 18 or 20. In still yet other embodiments, band 40 may be made of plastic, string, metal or any other material or combination of materials that will provide for proper operation of compact packaged towel 10.

[0025] In yet other forms of the invention, as shown in FIG. 3, one or more notches 34 may be positioned along one or more edges 23. In this form of the invention, a user may grasp one portion of edge 23 on each side of notch 34 and pull edges 23 in opposite directions so that notch 34 influences edge 23 to tear proximate notch 34 and thereby providing access to compartment 22 and allowing for access to towel 24.

[0026] In another embodiment, as shown in FIG. 4, a portion of one or more edges 23 may not be sealed so as to provide a non-sealed portion 50 of the pouch 16 where at its outermost edge of the walls 18 and 20 are not joined. In this embodiment, a user would grasp one wall 18 and the other wall 20 at the edge 23 non-sealed portion 50 and pull apart wall 18 from wall 20 thereby allowing for access to at least a portion of compartment 22 so as to provide access to towel 24.

[0027] In still other variations of the compact packaged towel 10, access to compartment 22 and towel 24 can be obtained by providing other types of opening means in addition to notch 34, pull-string 40, perforations 46 or non-sealed edge portion 50. For example, any process or device that is known in the art that can form weakened lines along at least a portion of package 16 can be used to open sealed package 16 whereby separation of package 16 along the weakened line(s) will provide access to compartment 22 and provide for removal of towel 24.

In A3 [0028] In use as shown in FIG. 1 in one form of the invention, a user would use both hands and grab one edge portion 23 with one hand and grab an edge portion 23 on the opposite side of perforation 46. The user would then pull or tear each edge 23 in opposite directions along perforation 46 so that perforations 46 influence at least one portion of edge 23 to tear along edge 23 so as to provide access to compartment 22. Then, the user would reach into compartment 22 and remove folded towel 24. The user may then unfold towel 24 and use it for a particular application. If desired, the user may simply dispose of towel 24 and pouch 16 after use. If towel 24 and pouch 16 are made of recyclable materials, the user may place these items in their respective recycling collection devices.

[0029] Specific embodiments of novel methods and apparatus for construction of novel compact packaged towels according to the present invention have been described for the purpose of illustrating the manner in which the invention is made and used. It should be understood that the implementation of other variations and modifications of the invention and its various aspects will be apparent to one skilled in the art, and that the invention is not limited by the specific embodiments described. Therefore, it is contemplated to cover the

present invention any and all modifications, variations, or equivalents that fall within the true spirit and scope of the basic underlying principles disclosed and claimed herein.